

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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P R 030958Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4754

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T AMMAN 3693

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, JO, US, XF

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH KING AND PRIME MINISTER FIFAI:

MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS

1. ON MONDAY, JUNE 2, HAD LONG SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH RIFAI AND LATER WITH KING. FOLLOWING EMERGED ON VARIOUS ITEMS AS LISTED.

2. ON ARAB SUMMIT POSTPONEMENT, RIFAI SAYS HE HAS RECEIVED SEVEN TELEGRAMS SOLICITING SUPPORT FOR POSTPONEMENT FROM LEAGUE SECREARY-GENERAL RIAD. HE SAYS HE WILL NOT BE PULLED IN AGAIN BY EGYPTIANS TO BECOMING A LONE FRONT RUNNER. HIS PUBLIC POSITION IS THAT JORDAN WILL DO WHAT MAJORITY OF OTHER ARABS WANT. PRIVATELY HE WILL TELL RIAD THAT WHEN EVERYONE ALSO IS ON BOARD JORDAN WILL COME ALONG TOO. HE EXPECTS THAT SUMMIT WILL BE POSTPONED, PARTLY BECAUSE OF LOCATION IN MOGADISCIO IN HOT SEASON, PARTLY BECAUSE SOME SEEM TO WANT OAU JULY SUMMIT TO COME FIRST AND PARTLY BECAUSE HE BELIEVES EGYPT WILL WANT TO SEE WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN POST-U.S. REASSESSMENT ENVIRONMENT BEFORE GOING TO A SUMMIT. HE SAYS THAT IF IT IS PUT OFF UNTIL JULY, IT

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CAN BE STALLED FURTHER BY MERE PAPER WORK OF TRYING TO

SET UP NEW TIME AND PLACE. JORDAN BELIEVES SYRIANS ALSO WANT TO POSTPONE ALONG WITH EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA AND THEREFORE IT IS PRACTICALLY SPEAKING POSTPONED.

3. BOTH RIFAI AND KING TELL ME THAT ASAD WILL COME TO JORDAN ON SUNDAY, JUNE 8, AND STAY FOR TWO DAYS. VISIT RECIPROCATES KING'S MID-APRIL VISIT TO DAMASCUS. KING WILL GO TO JIDDA JUNE 3 AND 4 AND TO QATAR JUNE 5. IN SAUDI ARABIA MAJOR FOCUS WILL BE ON SEEKING FUNDING TO PAY FOR HAWK AND VULCAN AD SYSTEMS. REDEYE WILL COME OUT OF REGULAR BUDGET. IN QATAR, KING WILL SEEK TO IMPLEMENT PLEDGE WHICH QATAR AND UAE MADE POST-RABAT CONFERENCE TO FUND NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN AMMAN AND FROM WHICH GERMAN FUNDS HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN. GOJ ESTIMATES COST AT 44 MILLION JD (\$132M) OVER 2 YEARS AND WILL SEEK 11 MILLION JD EACH YEAR FRO NEXT TWO YEARS FROM BOTH QATAR AND ABU DHABI. BOTH STATES HAVE RECENTLY GIVEN JORDAN SOME RABAT WAR CHEST MONEY ACCORDING TO RIFAI. QATAR HAS PAID SHARE IT PLEDGED (\$19 MILLION) AND ABU DHABI WILL PAY ITS PORTION OF \$38 MILLION IN FIVE INSTALLMENTS. IN SAUDI ARABIA, KING MAY ALSO SEEK PAYMENT OF FUNDS FOR NEW AIRBASE IN SOUTH JORDAN AT JAFR PREVIOUSLY PLEDGED BY SAUDI ARABIA (WE BELIEVE \$12 MILLION) AND SOME OF WHICH IS NOW NEEDED TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION.

4. RIFAI DISCUSSED BRIEFLY QUADRIPARTITE MEETING. HE SAID ALL HE KNOWS ABOUT IS IS WHAT ISMAIL FAHMI HAS BEEN TELLING THE PRESS. JORDAN WILL GO IF INVITED, BUT WILL GIVE PLO NO GROUND ON GUT ISSUES OF PLO POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN JORDAN OR COMMANDO BASES HERE TO ATTACK ISRAEL. RIFAI ADDED THAT ASAD TOLD HIM LAST WEEK THAT SADAT DURING HIS DAMASCUS VISIT RAISED ISSUE IN ARAFAT'S PRESENCE. ASAD'S CONCLUSION IS THAT SADAT WAS THROWING ARAFAT A BONE AND MEETING IS NOT LIKELY TO COME OFF, A CONCLUSION RIFAI AGREES WITH. RIFAI SAYS HOWEVER JORDAN WILL GO TO MEETING IF IT IS SET UP.

5. SYRIAN-JORDANIAN COOPERATION: IN DISCUSSION
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OF THIS SUBJECT, BOTH KING AND RIFAI STRESSED THE LIMITED NATURE OF THEIR PRESENT COORDINATION AND MADE IT CLEAR THEY HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO INTENTION OF UNITING IN A JOINT COMMAND WITHSYRIAN FORCES. RIFAI SAYS THAT IT WOULD CAUSE SIGNIFICANT DOMESTIC "DISRUPTION" IF JORDAN WERE TO DO SO. HE ALSO INDICATED AWARENESS OF FACT THAT TO DO SO WOULD SUBSTANTIATE ISRAELI PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT

SYRIAN-JORDANIAN COOPERATION AND MIGHT BE USED AGAINST JORDAN IN U.S. AND IN CONNECTION WITH ISRAELI EFFORTS TO ATTACK IN US SUPPORT FOR AIR DEFENSE FOR GOJ. HE REPEATED CATEGORICALLY THAT THERE ARE NO PLANS FOR SYRIAN TROOPS IN JORDAN AND THERE WILL BE NONE.

6. JORDAN FORCES IN THE JORDAN VALLEY: RIFAI AND KING ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT THEY ARE TAKING MINIMUM PRECAUTIONS TO DEFEND THEMSELVES IF ATTACKED BY THE ISRAELIS. THIS INCLUDES A VERY SMALL MOVEMENT OF TANKS (2 BATTALIONS, ONE WITH EACH OF THE INFANTRY DIVISIONS DEPLOYED IN AND AROUND THE VALLEY), SOME REORIENTATION OF INFANTRY FORCES IN THE NORTH FROM THE SYRIAN BORDER TOWARD THE VALLEY, AND THE REPAIR AND CLEARING OF FORTIFICATIONS AND INCREASED STATE OF ALERT IN AIR DEFENSE TROOPS AS WELL AS THE DISPERSAL OF VEHICLES FROM MASSED PARKS. ALL OF THIS KING STRESSED TO ME HAS TAKEN PLACE IN RESPONSE TO AN INCREASE IN ISRAELI FORCES IN THE VALLEY AND THE STATIONING OF AN ARMORED DIVISION IN AREA WEST OF THE DEAD SEA AND ANOTHER AROUND BEIT SHEAN WHICH COULD MOVE TOWARD SYRIA OR JORDAN. KING STRESSED HE HAS NO INTENTION OF ATTACKING ANY NE: HE CANNOT STAND AGAINST THE ISRAELIS, PARTICULARLY WITHOUT AN AIR DEFENSE. BUT HE IS RESOLVED TO DEFEND IF HE IS HIT.

7. TAPLINE: RIFAI CONFIRMED THAT TWO ENVOYS--FINANCE MINISTER MASA'DEH AND CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR NABULSI, WILL BE FOLLOWING UP ON EARLIER TALKS WITH SAUDIS IN AN EFFORT TO WORK OUT PROBLEMS OF PAST DEBTS TO TAPLINE AND PRICES FOR FUTURE DELIVERY. RIFAI SAID HE AND KING BOTH EXPECT TO WORK ON THE PROBLEM IF

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SUCH IS REQUIRED DURING THEIR VISIT TO RIYADH.

8. UNRWA: RIFAI SAID HE ALSO WANTS TO TAKE UP THIS QUESTION WITH SAUDIS IN SUPPORT OF UNRWA COMGEN RENIE'S REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS. I TOLD HIM I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF HE DID SO AND NOTED THAT WE WERE SUPPORTING UNRWA/UNSYG REQUEST WITH SAUDIS. PICKERING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975AMMAN03693
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750193-0499
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750683/aaaacydd.tel
Line Count: 162
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 AUG 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <28 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DISCUSSION WITH KING AND PRIME MINISTER FIFAI: MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS
TAGS: PFOR, JO, US, XF, (HUSSEIN I), (RIFAI, ZAYD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006